

REMARKS

Claims 1-10 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §103, Obviousness

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-10 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kazuya (JP 2001-171472) in view of Colburn et al. (US Pat. No. 3,920,170). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention set forth in claim 1 is directed to a method for fabricating a filtering member in which, after winding a wire, overlapping portions of the wire are bonded together in a layered manner through sintering for forming a mesh. For purposes of the present discussion, claim 6 sets forth similar limitations for a method of fabricating a filter for an airbag inflator.

The key feature of the invention is that the method comprises applying a contact surface pressure between portions of the wire to be bonded together; and maintaining the contact surface pressure as equal to or higher than a predetermined level that is set in accordance with a sintering condition, and conducting the sintering in this state, such that each bonding portion of the wire has a bonding strength equal to or greater than 4 N.

Therefore, regardless of the relatively high pressure and high temperatures caused by actuation of an airbag with which the mesh is used, the bonding portions of the wire 16 at the contact portions S are maintained without loosening. Accordingly, a relatively high bonding strength is ensured in the filter 15 with relatively low cost and improved efficiency. See page 10, lines 25-32.

Kazuya discloses a filter for an airbag inflator. This filter is made from a metal wire that is wound into a cylindrical shape around a jig with a specific tension and then sintered. The sintered filter is subjected to a compression test to measure a compressed amount and a recovery ratio. The recovery ratio is measured base on lengths of the filter before and after the filter is compressed.

However, Kazuya fails to disclose and teach the claimed bonding strength of each bonding portion of the wire. Kazuya also fails to disclose and teach maintaining the contact surface pressure of the wire as equal to or higher than a predetermined level that is set in

accordance with a sintering condition.

Colburn discloses a cylindrical screen. As a screen wire 36 is helically wrapped around screen rods 18, which axially extend on the outer periphery of a weld head 24, a screen cylinder 40 is formed. Then, the screen wire is welded to the rods 18. Colburn's screen is made from the helical wire and the rods. This is quite different from the claimed filter in which overlapping portions of the wire are bonded together in a layered manner through sintering for forming a mesh. The present invention does not require a plurality of rods. Colburn's wire is welded to the rods, but is not sintered to the wire. This is also different from the claimed invention.

Accordingly, even if both references are combined in the suggested manner, such combination would produce the claimed invention.

Because claims 2-5 and 7-10 depend from claims 1 and 6, respectively, they are distinguished from the cited references for the reasons explained above.

Therefore, it is respectfully asserted that in light of the claim amendments and the above arguments, the rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 USC §103 has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that all existing claims are now in a condition for allowance.

If there are any outstanding issues that the Examiner feels may be resolved by way of a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to call Colin Cahoon at the below-listed telephone number if, in the opinion of the Examiner, such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any payments that may be due or credit any overpayments to Carstens & Cahoon, LLP Deposit Account 50-0392.

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Respectfully submitted,

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